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OUT IN THE WOODS.

"HIPPITY-RIP!" says the little tree-toad,
 "What's going to happen to-day?
 I guess I had better get out of the road,
 If those children are coming this way."
 He stretches his hind-legs, so long and slim,
 For a flying leap to the hickory-limb;
 And then he pops open his ruby-red eyes
 At the funny proceedings, in solemn surprise.

Hop-skip-and-jump! it is Lorry and Len,
 With the rest of the romping crew;
 They're scampering over the woods again,
 And what are they going to do?
 To build up a bonfire, I do declare!
 Is there any mischief they wouldn't dare?—
 But roasting potatoes is jolly fun—
 You eat 'em scorched, and about half done!

"Clickety-clack!" says the saucy tree-toad,
 "What a fuss you young ones make!
 I wonder if baked potatoes are good?
 How long do they have to bake?"
 He turns to the mother-bird on her nest—
 Four little fledglings under her breast—
 "Do *you* know, madam, about such things?"
 She shakes her head, and she flutters her wings.

"Chickadee-dee! Don't you wish they would go?
 I am really afraid," says she,
 "That some of those dreadful children know
 I have got my nest in this tree.
 It's all very well for you, my dear;
 With your long legs you have nothing to fear:
 For me—of course I could easily fly,
 But fancy leaving my darlings to die!"

Slippety-slide! "There's a copperhead—quick!
 Keep Alice and Lorry away!"
 Len picks up a stone, Syd "goes for" a stick—
 The snake thinks he'd better not stay.
 He rapidly wriggles himself to his den,
 And pokes out his tongue at the whole race of men
 "Two-legged, hideous things! I affirm
 That only to look at them makes me squirm."

Piffety-whiff! what a cloud of smoke,
 As the dancing breeze comes near;
 Says the little tree-toad, "I shall certainly choke,
 If I stop in this atmosphere.
 I guess I had best hop a little bit higher,
 For I don't quite relish the smell of that fire.
 I'll go and enquire if Miss Katy-Did's in,
 And see what *she* thinks of this racket and din."

Fiddle-dee-dee! for the toad and the snake
 The children care never a whit;
 They eat their potatoes half-raw, and their cake,
 They gobble it up every bit.
 They jump on the logs where the sunshine is warm,
 And brown ants and black ants in colonies swarm;
 They hang on the saplings, and merrily swing
 Backward and forward, like birds on the wing.

But dingery-ding! in the midst of the play
 The sound of the dinner-bell comes;
 Hop-skip-and-jump! they all scamper away,
 And nothing is left but the crumbs.
 Now the bird flutters down, and the snake wriggles out;
 The pert little tree-toad goes hopping about;
 They eat up the scraps, and declare they are good,
 And bright shines the sun on the merry green wood.

— Mary E. Bradley.

MARSH AND POND FLOWERS.

THE earliest of the marsh flowers is the skunk-cabbage. This rank weed, notwithstanding its objectionable odor, is not devoid of interest, or even of a certain kind of beauty. Its broad and verdant leaves are the first green things to appear above the earth, with, perhaps, the exception of the grasses. They are seen in the early days of April, or even in the latter part of March in favorable seasons, and are preceded by the shell-like spathes which include the curious flowers arranged in a globular head. This arrangement immediately suggests the "Jack-in-the-Pulpit"—a closely related plant, which blooms some two months later. In it there is an elongated, fleshy body, called the spadix. It represents the officiating minister eloquent, beneath his striped canopy. We sometimes find a camp-meeting of these minute exhorters, whose sermons are not altogether in vain. Their discourse and text are always remembered, which certainly speaks well for their preaching.

The calla is another member of the same great family. Those who only know the garden plant that bears that name (the African *Richardia*) might be sadly disappointed when they saw, for the first time, our modest native species. It is very common in the cold peat bogs of the north. The sweet-flag, much loved by boys, is also a relative of the foregoing. It has aromatic and medicinal roots. The beautiful cultivated caladiums, whose wondrously variegated leaves adorn conservatories, is still another member

of the Arum family. With us, all of the order are small and weakly herbs, but in the tropics they are often very large, as Bates, and other voyagers on the Amazons, speak of their enormous size.

In order to dispose of all the members of one family at once, we have mentioned several flowers out of their chronological order. We will now return to the early days of April, and to a plant of far different appearance. It is the water star-wort, whose bright green trailing stems and leaves cover the surface of stagnant pools, and whose flowers, consisting simply of stamens and pistils with no floral envelopes, may be found throughout the summer. The leaves, when viewed beneath the microscope, are found to be covered with pretty star-shaped scales.

Next we may mention the cowslips, or more properly "marsh-marigolds," whose yellow cups illuminate the swamps in April. The nearly related water-crow-foot blooms later in the season, but may be mentioned here. Unlike the common buttercup, its petals are white. Generally the leaves are all submerged, but in one variety there are found two kinds; those which appear above the water are rounded, lobed, and very much like the ordinary foliage of the buttercup, while those beneath are cut repeatedly into hair-like divisions representing scarcely more than the veinage of the upper leaves. This phenomenon is exhibited by still other plants which have the same peculiar habits, and both kinds of leaves are undoubtedly adapted to the conditions in which they are found. The broad exposed surfaces of the rounded leaves are best calculated for assimilating the constituents of the atmosphere, while the capillary foliage possibly assists in buoying the plant, and its minute ramifications at the same time imbibe, by means of their very sub-division, certain beneficial qualities from the surrounding water, as do the similarly disposed gills of fishes.

One of the most beautiful of the true pond flowers is the buck-bean. Its blossoms may be found in May and June, if the seeker is sufficiently enthusiastic to despise the mud and water of a swamp in order to reach them. We remember but few occasions when we have been able to attain them without partially disrobing, but this annoyance only augments the triumph of the ultimate capture. The buck-bean, which bears the pretty scientific name of *Menyanthes*, is a cousin of the fair fringed gentian, but, unlike that wonder, its flowers are pure white, and singularly bearded. Its root is thickish and creeping, hidden far below in the slime and mud of the swamp. It has three oval leaflets borne on a long sheathing stem, and in drawing this from the water, we have at times obtained so much more than we bargained for, as to make us wonder whether the stems in question were not possessed in common by our own and a Chinese species.

While speaking of the gentian order, we must not fail to mention the floating-heart. Its title is romantic, but it has no reference, we are assured, to disappointed maidens or misanthropic lovers; it is derived from the appearance of the leaves, which closely resemble those emblems which figure so largely in valentines and architecture. The whole plant, at a little distance, appears like a diminutive water-lily, and it is only upon close examination that we detect the difference. Flowering all summer, sometimes in and always near the water, dwells the blue forget-me-not. The blossoms of the wild variety are usually much smaller than those of the cultivated kinds, but still they are little gems in their way. Another common name for the plant is mouse-ear, which is a less sentimental but far more significant one, as it relates to the downy leaves of some species which suggest the ears of mice.

What is it possible to say of the pure and odorous pond-lily? Hawthorne says that it is "the most satisfactory of flowers," and those who have seen it in its native beauty are prepared to echo the opinion. Do not be satisfied with such poor specimens as are peddled in the streets, nor indeed with any that have been plucked, but visit some quiet pond in person, and view them as they rest upon the water. No wonder that the Buddhists hail the holy lotus, and dedicate it to the apostle of their faith. The botanical name of the pond-lily is *Nymphaea*, the poetical Greeks having, with their usual good taste, associated it with the water nymphs. The roots are often large, and are buried deep down amidst the mud, while the round, flat leaves, often crimson underneath and attached to lengthy stems, repose upon the surface of the water. The flowers open in the early morning and rejoice in the summer sunshine, but in

the afternoon they close again to sleep through the hours of the night. The white of the petals is tinged with a delicate pink, suggestive of the Victoria Regia, the queenly lily of the Amazons. Quite as common as the white pond-lily is the yellow Nuphar, whose odor is as offensive as that of the skunk-cabbage.

The pitcher-plant is a curiosity of the vegetable kingdom. It is often found, and is sufficiently remarkable to insure attention, even from the usually unobservant. The flowers alone are curious enough, but as if not satisfied with making them unique, Nature has endowed the plant with leaves which are only surpassed in wonder by the lidded pitchers of *Nepenthes*. In our plant the leaf-stalks are expanded into hollow receptacles, usually found half full of water and drowned insects. This so-called pitcher is crested on one side, and near the top is full of hairs, which possibly distil the liquid contents. What answers to the blade of the leaf forms a monkish-looking hood, which projects over the opening of the pitcher. We are inclined to think that Pouchet had never partaken of the dubious nectar when he wrote with so much grace and sentiment about the pitcher:

"These cups, presents from the empire of Flora, and which rise from spot to spot at the feet of the traveler, are filled with pure and delicious water, for the benefit of which he is all the more grateful that he is encircled by nothing but marshes, the water of which is lukewarm and nauseous."

The sentence is well-rounded, certainly, and perhaps in southern America, which he is particular to specify, the water may be delicious, but we advise pedestrians who traverse our northern swamps to put their trust in other well-springs, as wonderful surprises are in store for him who rashly confides in *Sarracenia*. The purpose of this curious mechanism is as yet unknown, and many theories are advanced to account for it. One of these supposes that the insects which have been entrapped by the treacherous leaves by their decay give nourishment to the growing plant. This presents Nature in a cruel aspect, but it cannot be denied that she often appears so. To human seeming, the oppression of the weak by the strong throughout animal life appears cruel, and suggests thoughts not altogether pleasant. For whatever purpose the organs were created, or the original leaves modified, they are remarkable and puzzling.

The pickerel-weed is a handsome aquatic plant that blossoms through the later months of summer. It grows in shallow water near the margin of streams and ponds, has heart-shaped leaves, and ephemeral flowers, blue in color, that open upon a long and erect spike. Near it blooms the arrow-head, with its creamy white petals, three in number, and infinitely varied leaves; and also the water plantain, with smaller flowers arranged in a loose panicle, white or sometimes rose-colored.

Of other water plants, there are the bladder-worts, whose purple or yellow flowers somewhat resemble those of the snap-dragon, and whose leaves are floated by small inflated bladders; the pond-weeds waving in the varying current; the false-mermaid, and the pennywort, a pretty little genus of the parsley family, quite unlike its relatives in appearance. Then there is the cat-tail, loved of boys, which, with its cannon-sponge, stands like a tall artilleryman on dress-parade; the duckweeds, which form a "green mantle for the standing pool," and, last of all, the eel-grass, whose marriage rites have been the theme of poets. The leaves are long and grass-like, and grow entirely beneath the water. "The male flowers being confined to the bottom of the water by the shortness of the stems, the flower-buds themselves spontaneously break away from their short stalks, and float on the surface, where they expand and shed their pollen around the fertile flowers, which are raised to the surface at this time; afterwards, the thread-form scapes coil up spirally, drawing the fruit under water to ripen."

There are other water plants that might be mentioned, including many of the grasses and sedges, which equal in grace and beauty any of their flowering neighbors. Our design, however, is not to make a long catalogue of names, but merely to recall to mind a few of the pond-flowers. In the midsummer, when we are oppressed with heat, their very names are pleasant and cooling. We long to leave the city and plunge into the woods and swamps. We would consider ourselves rewarded by even one whiff of fragrance from the pond-lily; but all these aquatic plants are pleasantly suggestive, and we only regret that our words have so inadequately expressed their beauty.

— W. W. Bailey.